

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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R 161430Z OCT 73

FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3643

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0655

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS : SCUL, SF

SUBJ : REACTION TO APPOINTMENT OF FIRST COLORED RECTOR
TO WESTERN CAPE UNIVERSITY

1. THE SAG'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT DR.R.E.VAN DER ROSS HAD BEEN APPOINTED FIRST COLORED RECTOR OF UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE (UWC) THAT APPEARED IN PRESS ON OCTOBER 13 HAS RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC ACCLAIM IN THE CAPE TOWN AREA

2. OCTOBER 15 CAPE TIMES CONGRATULATED MINISTER OF COLOURED RELATIONS ON 'AN EXTREMELY GOOD CHOICE' THAT 'COULD WELL BE A POINTER TO A MORE REALISTIC ATTITUDE IN PRETORIA' AND WAS A 'HOPEFUL SIGN THAT AT LEAST SOME PEOPLE IN HIGH PLACES ARE AWARE THAT GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND RACIAL ATTITUDES GENERALLY HAVE CREATED A DANGEROUS DEGREE OF ALIENATION IN THE COLOURED COMMUNITY'. OCTOBER 15 ARGUS CALLED APPOINTMENT OF 'A MAN SO EMINENTLY SUITED FOR THE JOB' A WISE CHOICE AND NOTED EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT MADE BY BOTH WHITE AND NONA-WHITE STAFF OF UWC. BOTH PAPERS WONDER WHY SUCH APPOINTMENT THAT COULD OPEN WAY TO NEW ERA FOR COLORED EDUCATION AND WHITE-COLOURED RELATIONS HAD NOT BEEN MADE EARLIER.

3. PRESS CARRIES STATEMENTS FROM COLORED POLITICAL LEADERS
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LEON (LABOR PARTY) AND SWARTZ (FEDERAL PARTY) IN SUPPORT OF

APPOINTMENT.

4. IN THE PAST VAN DER ROSS, WHO IS A FOUNDER-MEMBER OF LABOR PARTY, HAS BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF NATIONAL PARTY POLICY TOWARD COLOREDS. HE IS A LEADING ORGANIZER OF COLORED'S PEOPLE'S CONVENTION. HE WAS SCHOOL INSPECTOR PRIOR TO HIS PRESENT POSITION AS PRINCIPAL OF EARLY LEARNING CENTRE AT ATHLONE (DUTCH FOUNDATION SUPPORTED PRE-SCHOOL TEACHING AND RESEARCH CENTER IN COLORED COMMUNITY NEAR CAPE TOWN). HE IS ALSO MEMBER OF COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO MATTERS RELATING TO COLORED POPULATION GROUP AND WILL STAY TO CONCLUDE HIS WORK ON THE COMMISSION(AT ITS CHAIRWOMAN'S INSISTANCE) BEFORE TAKING UP THE RECTORSHIP ON JANUARY 1,1977. MEANWHILE, DEAN W.L.MOUTON OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT WILL SERVE AS INTERIM RECTOR OF UWC.

5. CAPE TIMES REPORTED THAT MINISTER OF COLOURED RELATIONS, IN ANNOUNCING APPOINTMENT, ALSO SAID IT HAD BEEN RECOMMENDED TO STATE PRESIDENT THAT COLORED MEMBERSHIP OF UWC COUNCIL BE INCREASED FROM 3 TO 6 NEXT JANUARY.

6. COMMENT: APPOINTMENT, WHICH IS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE CABINET SANCTION, WOULD SEEM TO REPRESENT NEW APPROACH TO COLORED HIGHER EDUCATION VAN DER ROSS IS KNOWN TO OPPOSE UNIVERSITY APARTHEID AND IS INTERESTED IN WORKING TOWARD A GREATER DEGREE OF UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY. IN A PRESS INTERVIEW HE CHOSE NOT TO VIEW HIS APPOINTMENT IN RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT CRISIS CURRENTLY GRIPPING UWC, BUT IN TERMS OF HELPING STUDENTS EQUIP THEMSELVES FOR A BETTER SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY.

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